

James MacPherson
Transportation Committee
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My name is James MacPherson and I am representing Connecticut Driving School Professionals, an association made up of forward thinking commercial driving schools in the state.

In reviewing Bill No. 341 LCO No. 1536, An Act Concerning the Licensing of Drivers' Schools and Driving Instructors, this organization would like to go on record in support of all efforts that will improve the quality of driver education in Connecticut. We do, however, have the following concerns.

In Section 1, paragraph (a), there is a requirement that each applicant for a license or renewal of a license for a driving school shall be fingerprinted. There is no reference made to the licensing and fingerprinting provisions (lines 7, 8 and 9) that will be required of a corporate entity that owns and operates a driving school. Further, for schools that are set up as a sole proprietorship or partnership, does the new language in the act require that the principals be fingerprinted with every annual license renewal? The language strikes us as unclear on this matter and subject to a wide range of interpretation. Our concern on this matter continues to Section 1, paragraph (b) in which the current process for licensing instructors is expanded to include the phrase "...shall be fingerprinted..." (line 52). Currently, this is required only initially, not annually and we urge that this approach of requiring fingerprints only initially be continued. In addition, we question the need for instructors to go through the nearly complete application process each year. Would it not make sense to create a simpler renewal processes for instructors already licensed?

We support the requirement for state and national criminal history records checks, as well as checking the child abuse and neglect registry for all driving instructors. We would recommend that all such applicants also be required to go through a drug use screening. This provision, we do not find in the bill but believe it should be a requirement.

Section 1, paragraph (d) calls for three months to elapse before an applicant who fails the first instructor's test can be retested. This time period has not been enforced by the Department of Motor Vehicles in the past and we question the need for such a long waiting period before retesting. Note that in the case of most applicants this time period will exceed the training period for the initial instructor's license. The need for such a long waiting period for a retest is especially questionable for applicants who narrowly miss passing the written portion of the test.

I thank you all for your consideration of these points.